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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: BG KSCA OTRA TPHY

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH GRANTS COUNTRY CLEARANCE TO USGS
RESEARCH GEOLOGIST JOHN WHITNEY 09/19-29/2006

REF: SECSTATE 136087

¶1. Embassy Dhaka welcomes and grants country clearance for John Whitney, Research Geologist, USGS for his September 19 to 29 visit. Local contact is Sarah Duffy, Economic Officer, 880-2-885-5500, extension 2180, duffysa@state.gov.

¶2. Per ref tel, post will make arrangements for a travel expeditor. The Mission's workweek is Sunday-Thursday from 0800 to 1630 hours. There are no mission holidays during your visit.

¶3. No other embassy services have been requested.

¶4. Please note the following:

A) IMPORTANT. Personnel entering Bangladesh are required to possess a valid passport, with a minimum validity of six months. A valid visa is also required prior to arrival.

B) Departure: All personnel (including holders of diplomatic and official passports) are urged to use the services of the U.S. Mission's travel agent for reconfirming onward travel and to verify if the departure tax of 300 taka 300 (approximately USD 5) and the travel tax (approximately 2500 taka) have been included in the cost of the ticket. If not included, travelers must pay in taka at the airport.

C) Currency: The local use of U.S. dollars is prohibited by law, except for the payment of a hotel bill. Accommodation exchange for incidental local expenses is available at the Chancery. Reverse accommodation exchange is available only at the original place of exchange with original documents and receipts as proof. Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) are very limited, not readily accessible, and dispense taka only. Traveler checks cannot be used in most establishments except international hotels. Most major credit cards are accepted at international hotels.

D) American Recreation Association (Embassy club) facilities are available to U.S. citizen official visitors for a temporary membership fee of USD 10.00 per week. In addition to the membership fee, you will be required to purchase a cash card. A copy of your passport data page or a passport-sized photograph is necessary to obtain a cash card. This card will enable you to have meals and use club facilities (which include tennis court, squash court, swimming pool, exercise room, and restaurant/bar.)

E) The U.S. Commissary facility is available to U.S. citizen official visitors who are USG employees. However, payment is permitted only by USD personal check or traveler checks.

F) Health: All travelers must have health insurance to

cover medical evacuations by air ambulance, and should carry with them the 24/7 contact information for their insurer. Medical care in Bangladesh is very basic.

Intestinal problems are common in Dhaka. Visitors must exercise care in what they eat and drink. Presume that all tap water is contaminated, even in hotels. Travelers are advised to drink bottled/boiled water and eat only fruits and vegetables that have been cooked and peeled.

Undercooked meat should be avoided. Travelers should also avoid eating uncooked dairy products and food sold on the streets. Visitors who take medication on a regular basis should bring enough for the duration of their visit.

The U.S. Mission has a Medical Unit staffed by a U.S. physician and registered nurses. Visitors should bring a supply of mosquito repellent to Dhaka. There have been cases of mosquito-borne illnesses, including dengue fever, which is transmitted by a day-biting mosquito. Supplies are usually available in the commissary; however, you should bring your own supply in case you arrive in Dhaka when the commissary is closed (on Sunday). We also recommend that travelers have updated immunizations, especially for typhoid.

G) Security: Bangladesh continues to experience some anti-American sentiment as the result of U.S. military and other actions in the war against terrorism and events in the Middle East. Demonstrations have the potential to take place any time and to be unruly. In addition, longstanding rivalry between the two leading political parties prompt periodic general strikes (hartals), public demonstrations, and marches. Normal vehicular traffic is discouraged during the hartals. Visitors should strictly avoid all political protests, demonstrations and marches.

With the prior approval of the RSO, visitors may carry an unclassified laptop into the Controlled Access Area

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provided the laptop is transported under the immediate personal control of the visitor or via diplomatic pouch.

The Embassy advises Americans to be aware of their surroundings at all times, to avoid predictable behavior, and not to accept packages from unknown individuals. Sensitive or personal matters should not be discussed over local telephone lines.

The State Department classifies the crime threat in Dhaka as high. While foreigners are not generally the targets of violent crimes, pick-pocketing, purse-snatching, and other forms of street crime occur frequently, especially in areas frequented by foreigners. Visitors should avoid walking alone after dark, carrying large sums of money, or wearing expensive jewelry. Valuables should be stored in the hotel safety deposit box and should not be left unattended in hotel rooms. Visitors should use the Embassy Motor pool as the Chief of Mission has declared public transportation to be unsafe. In addition, you should keep the Embassy's 24-hour emergency telephone number available at all times (885-5500); receptionists are on duty 24 hours a day.

15. We look forward to your visit.
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